



TERRAIN  
NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

# WILDLIFE FRIENDLY FENCING

Protect your land, livestock and wildlife

This factsheet is for general information only and is tailored for wildlife that fly or glide. Each species and property is different.

## Fencing facts

Traditional barbed wire fencing is a hazard to native wildlife. It causes:

- Wildlife deaths or injuries from entanglements and collisions
- Barriers to safe access to important habitat and resources.

The top wire of a fence is the most dangerous for wildlife. Ideally, the top wire should therefore not be barbed wire. Its even better when the top two strands are not barbed wire.

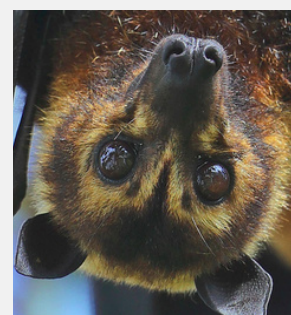
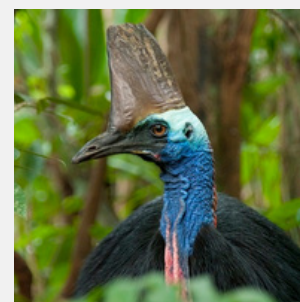
There are fencing options that can minimise risks to wildlife while still being effective for farming, and many landholders are adopting these new solutions.

### Where is wildlife-friendly fencing particularly important?

- Fences that have entangled wildlife in the past.
- New fences.
- Paddocks on the edge of forest.
- Windy ridgelines.
- Areas where trees hang over or are near the fence.
- Gaps between trees that are too wide for gliders to glide safely above fencelines.
- Wildlife habitat and corridors.
- Along and across waterways. Ideally use wildlife friendly fencing to keep stock out of waterways, supplemented by off stream watering points for stock.

## Animals at risk

- Nocturnal animals, especially owls, bats and gliders. These are the most vulnerable to entanglement.
- Many are endangered species in the Wet Tropics region:
  - Mahogany, Yellow-bellied and Greater Gliders
  - Spectacled Flying-fox
  - Cassowary
  - Masked owl
- **86% of entanglements are on the top strand**
- **95% are on the top two strands.**



# Best fencing options

## Replacing the top strand with barbless double-strand twisted wire.

Barbed wire and wildlife-friendly barbless wire use the same kit for installation, so it costs the same and cattle can't break it. Straight/plain wire can also be used but it needs different tools for installation. Twisted barbless is a straight swap.

## Replacing the top two strands with barbless double-strand twisted wire.

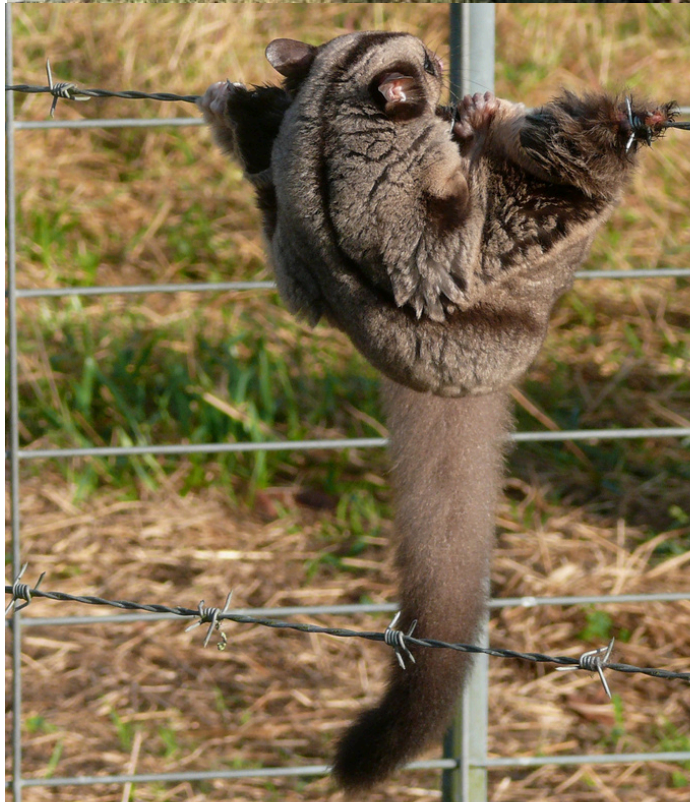
Use only three or four strands total (depending on your stock). This helps the passage of cassowaries and tree kangaroos.

## Not replacing your fence yet? Make the top strand more visible or cover it in key areas:

Place poly pipe (preferably white) over sections of the fence in areas where animals have been caught previously. Secure it with cable ties to prevent cattle stripping and eating it.

Painting the top strands white or adding materials that move in the wind helps make fencing more visible to wildlife. Wide white electric fence tape is effective in hotspot sections.

**Other options:** Electric fencing and virtual fencing (using neckbands) are alternative ways to control livestock that are safer for wildlife.



# What to avoid

- Five strand wire is the worst for wildlife. Four-strand wire is better.
- Mesh fencing prevents wildlife from moving through. If you need mesh, consider creating a passage for wildlife by fencing only part of the block.

# Different species

- **Cassowaries:** Cassowaries often try to step through the middle of a fence or sometimes under it. Fences with four or less strands, ideally all barbless, are best.
- **Waterbirds:** If your fence is near a wetland, a plain bottom strand can help avoid rail (a type of waterbird) injuries. Fences set back from wetlands enable cranes to take off and land.



For more information:

<https://wildlifefriendlyfencing.org>